

bomb of the Troubles; it was the opening shot of a vicious attack on the peace. The question is not whether there will be more bombs and more attempts to undo with violence the verdict of the ballot box. There well may be. The question is not whether tempers will flare and debates will be divisive. They certainly will be. The question is: How will you react to it all—to the violence? How will you deal with your differences? Can the bad habits and brute forces of yesterday break your will for tomorrow's peace? That is the question.

In our so-called modern world, from Bosnia to the Middle East, from Rwanda to Kosovo, from the Indian subcontinent to the Aegean, people still hate each other over their differences of race, tribe, and religion, in a fruitless struggle to find meaning in life in who we are not, rather than asking God to help us become what we ought to be. From here on in Northern Ireland, you have said only one dividing line matters, the line between those who embrace peace and those who would destroy it, between those energized by hope and those paralyzed by hatred, between those who choose to build up and those who want to keep on tearing down.

So much more unites you than divides you: the values of faith and family, work and community, the same land and heritage, the same love of laughter and language. You aspire to the same things: to live in peace and security, to provide for your loved ones, to build a better life and pass on brighter possibilities to your children. These are not Catholic or Protestant dreams, these are human dreams, to be realized best together.

The American people, as the Lord Mayor noted, know from our own experience about bigotry and violence rooted in race and religion. Still today, we struggle with the challenge of building one nation out of our increasing diversity. But it is worth the effort. We know we are wiser, stronger, and happier when we stand on common ground. And we know you will be, too.

And so, members of the Assembly, citizens of Belfast, people of Northern Ireland, remember that in the early days of the American Republic, the Gaelic term for America was *Inis Fa'il*, Island of Destiny. Today, Americans see you as *Inis Fa'il*, and your des-

tiny is peace. America is with you. The entire world is with you. May God be with you and give you strength for the good work ahead.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the main auditorium at Waterfront Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Lord Mayor David Alderdice of Belfast; First Minister David Trimble and Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon of the Northern Ireland Assembly; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Philip Lader, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland; U.S. Consul General Ki Fort; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty peace talks in Northern Ireland; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former Prime Ministers John Bruton and Albert Reynolds of Ireland; former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; and U.K. Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown.

### **Remarks at a Groundbreaking Ceremony for Springvale Educational Village in Belfast** *September 3, 1998*

Thank you very much, Margaret. Margaret and Gerard said everything that needs to be said. I feel sort of like a fifth wheel now. They, just standing here and speaking as they did, embodied everything I would like to say to you and everything you would like to say to each other and everything your better selves calls on all of you to do. And I thank them for being here.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your leadership in so many ways large and small. Hillary and I are delighted to be back in Northern Ireland and to be here with you and Cherie. And I thank all those who were responsible for the Vital Voices Conference at which Hillary spoke yesterday. I also would like to thank Secretary Mo Mowlam, who is one of the most remarkable people I ever met.

I thank others who have made this possible. Mo mentioned the First Lady. I also would like to thank Willie McCarter, the Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland; Lord Smith of Clifton, Vice Chancellor of the University; Professor Patrick Murphy, the Director of the Belfast Institute. I thank the members of the new Assembly with us

today, the Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon, David Ervine, Joe Hendron, and of course, Gerry Adams. We're glad to be in your constituency, and I echo the words of the Prime Minister.

I thank the Americans who are here, the distinguished Congressional delegation, the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley; the Secretary of Commerce, Bill Daley. You will notice if you get a list of the Congress Members and the list of the people in the delegation that—Assistant Secretary of Labor, Kitty Higgins—there will be an enormous preponderance of Irish names in the American delegation here. And I thank them all. I thank especially Jim Lyons, my Special Adviser for Economic Initiatives, and Senator George Mitchell. I also would like to remember today our late Commerce Secretary, Ron Brown, who did so much to bring opportunity here and who envisioned this day that we celebrate.

I want to say that, above all, the people who deserve recognition today are people on both sides of the peace line who need the work that will be done here. Here there is a site; there is a design; there are resources; but more than that there is a glimpse of the future, that people so long torn apart will create something together that will benefit all.

Of course, there remain those who oppose the vision all of you share for reconciliation and tolerance. Thank God they live in the past and their support dwindles. With courage, determination, and palpable pride which we saw all up and down the streets today driving from the Waterfront Hall to here, it is clear that people have chosen peace and the chance for prosperity.

These neighborhoods are your home, and you have taken them back. Now you are ready to move forward into a new century of hope, or, in the words of that great son of Belfast, Van Morrison, to walk down the avenues again because the healing has begun.

Indeed, the future has begun. And clearly the best path to a future that involves every citizen of every circumstance in every neighborhood is a strong education. Springvale Educational Village will help you get there. It will be a living, breathing monument to the triumph of peace. It will turn barren

ground into fertile fields cultivating the world's most important resource: the minds of your people—providing opportunity not just for the young but for those long denied the chance for higher learning, creating jobs in neighborhoods where too many have gone without work for too long, bringing more technology and skill so that Northern Ireland at last can reap the full benefits of this new economy, creating unity from division, transforming a barbed wire boundary that kept communities apart into common ground of learning and going forward together.

Again, let me thank Gerry Adams, who has worked hard to bring justice and a better life to the people of this constituency. There is more to be done by people on all sides. But his words this week, and I quote, "violence must be a thing of the past, over, done with, gone." Those words were music to ears all across the world and they pave the way for the progress still to come. Thank you, sir.

I am grateful that America was able to support Springvale working through the International Fund for Ireland, together with generous funding provided by the United Kingdom, the University of Ulster, and the Belfast Institute. All these allow us to break ground today.

I also want to acknowledge the support of Gateway 2000, an American company which has such a strong presence in the Republic and which has announced plans to donate a state-of-the-art computer system when Springvale opens. And I'm proud of the people here in Northern Ireland who, once again, have moved beyond pain to accomplishment.

Now you have, in the words of Seamus Heaney, a chance to know the incomparable and dive to a future. You have dared to dream of a better tomorrow, now you dare to build one. That is even better. On this site and across this isle, what once seemed impossible is now becoming real. Don't stop.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in a tent at the construction site. In his remarks, he referred to students Margaret Gibney, who introduced the President, and Gerard Quinn, who introduced Prime Minister Tony Blair; the Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Blair; United Kingdom Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Marjorie

Mowlam; William T. McCarter, chairman, International Fund for Ireland; Lord Trevor Smith, vice chancellor, University of Ulster; Professor Patrick Murphy, chairman, Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education; Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly Seamus Mallon; Northern Ireland Assembly members David Ervine and Joseph Hendron; Sinn Féin leader and Northern Ireland Assembly member Gerry Adams; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; musician Van Morrison; and poet Seamus Heaney.

### **Remarks to Victims of the Bombing in Omagh, Northern Ireland**

*September 3, 1998*

Thank you very much. Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Blair, Secretary Mowlam, Ambassador Lader, Senator Mitchell; to the people of Omagh. Hillary and I are honored to be in your presence. We come to tell you that a long way away the American people have mourned the loss of 28 innocents and all those who were injured. For those victims and family members who have come here today to say a word to us, we thank you for your presence.

To all of you, we thank you for standing up in the face of such a soul-searing loss and restating your determination to walk the road of peace.

We came here, knowing, as the Prime Minister said, that words are not very good at a time like this, simply to express our sympathy with the good people of this community, especially with the victims and their families, and again to support your determined refusal to let a cowardly crime rob you of the future you have chosen.

What has happened here on August the 15th was so incredibly unreasonable, so shocking to the conscience of every decent person in this land, that it has perversely had exactly the reverse impact that the people who perpetrated this act intended. By killing Catholics and Protestants, young and old, men, women, and children, even those about to be born, people from Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic, and abroad—by doing all that in an aftermath of what the people have voted for in Northern Ireland, it galvanized,

strengthened, and humanized the impulse to peace.

Even more than when we were here 3 years ago, people are saying to me: “It’s high time that the few stop ruining the lives of the many; high time that those who hate stop bullying those who hope; high time to stop the lilt of laughter and language being drowned out by bombs and guns and sirens; high time to stop yesterday’s nightmares from killing tomorrow’s dreams.”

All I wanted to say today is that nothing any of us can say will erase the pain that those of you who have experienced loss know now. Just a few days ago, we had to—Hillary and I did—go to the airport to meet the plane bringing home the bodies of the Americans who were killed in the Embassy bombing in Africa, and to go from table to table to meet their families. There is no word to explain a mindless act of terror that grabs the life of an innocent. But I think the only way to truly redeem such a terrible loss is to make the memories of the innocents monuments to peace. We cannot brook a descent into terror. Northern Ireland is walking away from it. Life will never be the same here, but it will go on.

Since the bombing, one of the victims, Nicola Emory, has given birth to a healthy baby. I pray that baby will never know an act of terror and will live a long, full life in the 21st century, proud of a hometown that learned through tragedy the meaning of community.

I’d like to close my remarks by reading to you from a letter that our Ambassador in Dublin received from a young man named Michael Gallagher from County Mayo after this happened. He wrote to the American Ambassador: “You don’t know me. You may not even get this letter. But after yesterday’s tragedy I just wanted to do something. I am 29 years old, an Irishman to the very core of my being. But throughout my life there has never been peace on this island. I never realized how precious peace could be until my wife, Martina, gave birth to our daughter, Ashleen, 20 months ago. We don’t want her to grow up in a society that is constantly waiting for the next atrocity, the next bunch of young lives snuffed out in a sea of hatred and fear. Ashleen’s name means ‘vision’ or